

Single Family Design Guidelines Update Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update

Steering Committee

Meeting #14 Notes November 12, 2004

Steering Committee members: Chair Dianne Channing, Stephanie Christoff (attending for Richard Six), Joe Guzzardi, Bill Mahan, Helene Schneider.

Staff: Jaime Limón (Supervising Planner), Heather Baker (Project Planner), Jason Smart (Intern).

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

Brigitte Forssell: Presented correspondence to the Steering Committee. Concerned that the building inspection process does not always return projects to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) when there is a change from previously approved plans. Neighborhood notification is needed when such changes occur.

III. Administrative Items

The Steering Committee requested that meeting notes be distributed to ABR members.

IV. Good Neighbor Policies: Issue Paper G

Staff defined the terms “goal,” “policy,” “objective,” “standard,” and “guideline” as follows (derived from California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research and www.dictionary.com):

Goal: Direction setter.

Policy: A specific statement that guides decision making.

Objective: Specified end, condition or state that is an immediate step toward attaining a goal.

Standard: A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied.

Guideline: A statement or other indication of policy or procedure by which to determine a course of action – not required, not as strong as a standard.

The Steering Committee requested that similar definitions be included in the NPO Update final product and suggested the definition of “guideline” be altered to read:

Guideline: A statement or other indication of policy or procedure by which to determine a course of action – not required but strongly recommended ~~as strong as a standard~~.

Assistant City Attorney Scott Vincent clarified that failure to comply with guidelines can form a legal basis for project denial by the ABR; however, interested parties may not legally require the ABR to strictly enforce guidelines.

Staff continued presentation of Issue Paper G from Meeting #13. The Steering Committee made the following comments regarding Issue Paper G recommendations:

Recommendation #5: Define balconies and decks separately.

Deck: A flat open platform, typically with a railing, either attached to a building or free-standing and supported by pillars, posts, or walls.

Balcony: A platform cantilevered from the wall of a building, usually resting on brackets or consoles, and enclosed with a railing.

1. Design Review Required

Tentatively support requiring decks to be reviewed by ABR, but not requiring ABR review of balconies measuring 3' by 7' or less, because the space is not useable and has a relatively small visual impact.

2. 15' Interior Yard Setback

Guidelines should encourage 15' interior yard setbacks for decks and balconies over 3' by 7' in order to maintain neighbors' privacy.

3. Chimneys < 8' Tall on Decks

Guidelines should discourage freestanding chimneys because of potential view blockage. Discuss further during Hillside Issues discussion.

Recommendation #6: Implement placement and screening Option 2: Allow rear and side yard decks and balconies in some cases.

Tentatively requiring ABR review for balconies larger than 3' by 7', as decided in Recommendation #5 discussion. Oppose landscaping requirements or guidelines as mitigation of deck or balcony privacy/view impacts because landscaping upkeep may not be enforced.

Recommendation #7: Require an "Early Neighbor Discussion Pre-Application Step" and provide incentives for an optional "*Extensive* Early Neighbor Discussion Pre-Application Step."

Oppose requiring early neighbor discussion because differences in language, culture, and personality would make it difficult for applicants to discuss projects with neighbors. However, support giving applicants handouts that encourage and clearly state the benefits of early neighbor discussions, because early neighbor discussions can help to ensure favorable project outcomes.

Recommendation #8: Continue current Planning Commission story pole practices and consider Staff ability to require story poles for some Design Review projects.

- The ABR would need to conduct site visits to adequately evaluate projects with story poles.
- Detailed standards are needed for story pole requirements so that projects have equally effective story poles.
- Further discuss as part of Hillside Issues discussion.

Recommendation #9: Allow Design Review hearing comment and discussion of private views.

- Concern that the ABR could become an arbitrator of private disputes if this recommendation is implemented was expressed. This could impact ABR's current focus/role.
- Staff to draft introductory language on Good Neighbor Policies to strengthen consideration of private views. Language to be reviewed at next meeting.

V. Intent Language

Not discussed due to loss of quorum.

VI. Review Upcoming Schedule

VII. Adjourn